

## **CITY OF NEWBURGH ARTS & CULTURE FORUM 3**

**Held on Monday, December 6, 2004**

### **MEETING REPORT SUMMARY**

#### **Introduction**

In August 2004 Jean-Ann McGrane, the City Manager of the City of Newburgh, announced plans to host a brainstorming session to focus on the role that arts and culture can play in redeveloping Newburgh and uniting its citizens. This first “Arts and Culture Forum” was held on Monday, September 20, 2004 at the Newburgh Free Library and was attended by 82 people. Printed copies of reports from this meeting, as well as reading materials on arts and culture initiatives that have taken place across the country, are available for review at the Newburgh Free Library Local History Room and on the City’s website at <http://cityofnewburgh-ny.gov>, under Public Notices.

A Second Forum, held on November 10<sup>th</sup>, and attended by 46 people, launched the process to establish an Arts Advisory Board, or Arts Commission, for the City of Newburgh. An Ad Hoc Arts Advisory Working Group of sixteen members of the Newburgh community are now working with the City to develop the ordinance for the proposed Arts Advisory Board.

A Third Forum, held on December 6, 2004, which identified facilities and sites in Newburgh that may be available for arts and cultural use, and suggested possible uses for these venues, was attended by 70 people.

The Newburgh Arts and Culture Initiative is being developed by the City of Newburgh in partnership with the Orange County Citizens Foundation, Orange County Tourism / Orange Arts and Arts In Orange / Arts Community Grants and the Newburgh Free Library.

#### **Meeting Report**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nicholas Valentine, who thanked participants for attending and voiced his support and that of the other members of the City Council for the work being done through these three Arts Forums. Said Mayor Valentine:

*The other members of the City Council and I have been very encouraged by the results of the first two forums—by the enthusiasm and expansive visions of Newburgh’s future that was voiced in the first meeting, to the excitement expressed about the development of an Arts Advisory Board in the second meeting. We are very much looking forward to working with the sixteen people*

*who volunteered at the last meeting to become part of an Ad Hoc Working Group to help with the development of an Arts Advisory Board for Newburgh and to do whatever we can to assist in this process.*

Jean-Ann McGrane also welcomed participants and reviewed the goals for the Third Arts Forum. Said Ms. McGrane:

*Tonight's meeting will explore sites and facilities in Newburgh that may be available for culture use. The goals of tonight's meeting are:*

- *To identify venues that can support the growth of arts and culture in Newburgh*
- *To identify potential uses for these venues*
- *To identify potential users for these venues*
- *To identify what is needed to maximize the use of these venues*
- *To identify boundaries for a possible "cultural district" that may include some or all of these facilities*
- *To encourage thinking about collaborative, city-wide events that take advantage of, and/or draw attention to, these venues and to the City as a whole.*

*To help stimulate your thinking tonight, I want to share with you some things we have learned from other cities that have developed and used cultural facilities and events to stimulate their city's redevelopment.*

*In 1982, Pittsburgh created a 14-block Cultural District that, in its first decade of operation, generated \$33 million in government investment and \$63 million in private and philanthropic funds, resulting in real estate and event income that increase tax revenues from \$7.9 million in 1986 to \$19.1 million in 1994.*

*The City of Tucson created a 7-block Arts District in 1984 that has seen the retail vacancy rate in that area decline by 50% and city sales tax revenues increase by 11.7%, compared with a general, citywide increase of 7.4%.*

### **ADD INFO ABOUT PHILADELPHIA**

*Just as the arts have turned things around in other cities, so we believe they can do the same thing for Newburgh.*

### **Slide Show of Selected Buildings, Lots, Parks and Community Buildings Available for Community Use**

Following the general evening introductions, Tiombe Calle-Carter, who is the [INSERT TITLE] in the Department of Planning and Economic Development in the City of Newburgh, provided a visual overview of some of the buildings, parks,

vacant lots, churches and community centers that are available for cultural use and that been included in the List of Available Sites provided to meeting participants. She showed slides of a number of properties currently owned by the City of Newburgh that are available for purchase or for use by cultural groups and/or artists, including vacant buildings as well as vacant lots. She also showed slides of a number of Newburgh's churches, which are both beautiful and abundant and which also encourage use by cultural groups.

Individuals who are interested in learning more about the facilities owned by the City of Newburgh are encouraged to call Tiombe Carter directly at (845) **XXX-XXXX**.

Following the slide presentation and a brief discussion, participants broke into breakout groups for discussion.

### **Breakout Sessions**

In the two breakout groups that comprised the main part of the meeting, participants spent well over an hour discussing topics related to available arts and cultural facilities and sites, and city-wide events that could take place in these and other sites around the city.

Questions addressed in each of the breakout groups were:

- Are there any additional facilities and/or sites that should be added to the existing list of potential cultural venues?
- What are some of the potential uses for these venues, which may include performance or exhibition spaces, artist studios, live/work spaces, community art centers, etc.?
- Who may be some of the potential users for these sites?
- What is needed to maximize the use of these venues?
- If there were to be a "cultural district" in Newburgh, what would its boundaries be?
- What are some collaborative, citywide events that already exist or can be developed to bring attention to Newburgh, its venues and its organizations? (Ideas may include expanding the current Riverfront Festival and River Art Walk, and developing citywide art exhibits and performance festivals, a mural program, parades, poetry slams, crafts fairs, as well as other activities.)
- How would you rank these events in terms of their priority?

The two breakout groups were charged with recording important discussion points and reporting back to the assembled group at the end of the evening.

## **SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS**

### **Group 1 – Comments**

Group 1 offered the following suggestions in response to questions posed to the breakout groups:

#### **Other Venues Not Included on the Original List**

- St. Patrick's Church, Liberty Street
- Washington Market Building, 97-99 Liberty Street
- Building on Liberty, on East Side between Broad & Clinton Streets
- Old Washington Stables, off Lander Street
- City Club Building on Grand Street, corner of Second
- Fish Market Building on Renwick & Liberty Streets
- 2 Liberty Street (private owner—storefront dedicated to arts usage)
- Two vacant lots on south corners of Broadway & Liberty Streets
- 62 Grand Street – Home of new performing arts center – Contact Kevin White at 562-5650
- Newburgh Yarn Mills on Wisner near Broadway
- Former NY Central Railroad
- Masonic Lodge on Grand Street
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Karpeles MSS Library Museum (needs elevator access for public use)
- Coliseum Restaurant on Upper Broadway
- Kreisler Furniture Store on Broadway
- Public Elementary Schools
- Yard Mills
- Yellow Bird Gallery and Building

#### **Potential Uses for Identified Venues and Ideas for City-Wide Events**

- Murals
- Community Flea Markets
- Food-related Festivals, including an international culinary festival, a clam bake, a "Taste of Newburgh"
- Art Therapy Clinics
- Women's Events—film festivals, dancing, etc.
- Moving art Event / Soapbox Derby
- First Night Event
- Performing and Visual Art Workshops
- A Film Institute
- A Major Film Festival
- Music (all kinds) Festivals
- Photographic Events

- Neighborhood, Community Theater
- Native People's Pow-Wow's (in Spring and Fall)
- Jazz and Musical Heritage Festivals
- Outdoor Events (Downing Park) – Film, Music and other Events
- Public Art Installations
- Weekly Jam Sessions and Music Workshops
- Poetry Slams
- Art/Music Appreciation Courses for the General Public
- Architectural and Landscape Tours of the City
- Dance performances
- Parades
- An architecture museum
- Audio / video recording studios
- Art "Stunts"
- Film Locations (establish a Film Commission)
- Creation of a civic / visual and performing arts presentation center

#### **Potential Users for Identified Venues**

- Trestle Inc. (murals)
- Art recovery support groups & workshop spaces
- Local theatre groups (many!)
- Che and Tash/be Entertainment ("Putting on the Ritz")
- Newburgh Symphony
- Newburgh Artists Salon
- Newburgh Sculpture Project
- Individual artists, musicians and craftspeople
- Arts Alliance of Lower Hudson Valley

#### **Recommended Boundaries for a Possible Cultural District**

- To include all venues existing in and around the city, the entire city should be considered a Cultural Area
- For purposes of marketing and event coordination within a particular walking distance, identify cluster areas of venues, such as "Beautiful Downtown Newburgh"

#### **Group 2 – Comments**

Group 2 offered the following suggestions in response to questions posed to the breakout groups:

#### **Additional Venues Not Included on the Original List**

- Steel Slide
- Middlehope Drive-In
- R.A.W.
- Mural surfaces yet to be determined

- 188 Liberty Café
- Masonic Temple
- Last Saturday Brochure
- Colonial Terrace Park
- Kreisler Building on Broadway
- 90 Broadway
- Streets – the actual surfaces
- Foundry (empty loft)
- Mount Saint Mary Desmond
- Mount Saint Mary Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital
- Storm King School
- Empty Storefronts

### **Potential Uses for Identified Venues**

- Visitor Reception Centers
- Administrative Offices
- Tourism Booths
- Education / Class space
- 3-D artists' spaces / sculpture studios
- Home for Outsider Art – by people who have not been trained
- Arts Center – to provide exhibition spaces
- Storefront productions / locations for films
- Theatrical / movement / dance spaces
- Murals on abandoned, storefronts on Lower Broadway, on properties that are public- and privately-owned

### **How To Maximize Uses of These Spaces**

- Legitimize graffiti art
- Support students to continue their education through mentorship programs, portfolio development, youth outreach into the community
- Communication and public awareness of cultural activities, including advertising and other forms of promotion
- Address display needs (e.g., lighting and installation needs)
- Address safety and other code compliance
- City-provided insurance and/or liability protection for artists

### **Recommended Boundaries for a Possible Cultural District**

- Include the current Historical District
- Include the area near the Ferry
- Establish an area that can be inclusive of many facilities, choosing existing locations as anchors

## **Recommended City-Wide Events**

### Existing Events:

- River Art Walk
- The Riverfront Festival
- Greater Newburgh Symphony
- Library Programs
- Downing Park Concerts
- Regatta
- Newburgh Sculpture Project
- 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Events

### New Events:

- International Festivals
- Choral Programs
- Church Concerts
- Collaborations with the City of Beacon
- Open mike programs on the waterfront

## **BREAKOUT GROUP REPORTS**

### **Breakout Group 1**

In addition to naming additional venues to be considered as possible cultural venues and suggesting possible uses and events to animate these venues, participants identified priorities with regard to city-wide events to help galvanize the development of art and culture in Newburgh as follows:

- Music Festivals—in particular, a city-wide Jazz Festival that includes workshops for youth
- Culinary Festivals / “Clambakes”
- Landscape and Architectural Tours of the City
- Development of an Architectural Museum to highlight the City’s architectural treasures
- Parades
- Murals and Public Art Projects
- Performances of all kinds

### **Breakout Group 2**

Group 2 proposed the following priority uses for venues recommended for potential cultural use:

- Education programs for students involving the direct teaching of art skills and sharing of experiences by college art students and professional artists
- Programs and projects that derive from such education programs, including mentorships, apprenticeships, and specific art projects
- Programs that combine art and healing practices targeted to specific groups

Regarding maximizing the use of facilities, Group 2 offered the following priority recommendations:

- “Get the word out” through marketing and public relations activities
- Create an infrastructure that is safe, reliable and welcoming
- Address insurance and liability issues
- Diversify the use of each facility (e.g., facilities could be used both by arts groups in the evening and healing and community-building groups during the day)

Following the Breakout Group Reports, Mayor Valentine and City Manager Jean-Ann McGrane encouraged all participants to stay involved through involvement in soon-to-be constituted Committees that will address specific needs voiced during the Arts Forums, and to communicate ideas through conversations with Ad Hoc Working Group members and through e-mail and phone communications. They reminded the group that the Arts Advisory Board Ad Hoc Working Group would be meeting on the following Monday. Both the Mayor and City Manager thanked those in attendance for their participation and indicated that if the need arose, there may be other, future forums focused on specific aspects of Newburgh’s cultural development.



**CITY OF NEWBURGH  
ARTS & CULTURE FORUM  
EVALUATION RESPONSES  
FROM MEETING ATTENDEES**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES: 28**

How would you rate this meeting as a useful third step in beginning a cultural planning process for Newburgh?

Excellent	17
Very Good	8
Adequate	0
Not Very Good	1

**If you did not think this meeting was useful, why not?**

“It seems like nothing was accomplished but the venting of pipe dreams.”

**In general, how would you rate your experience of the three Art Forums that have taken place so far?**

Excellent	21
Very Good	4

**Are there topics that you would like to see addressed in a similar forum?**

- How to generate funding for the purchase of a building
- Putting venues and artists together
- Arts v. injustice, violence and drugs
- Strategies on funding
- Incorporating the community and children of the community
- Education (youth) / Minority / Mental Health
- Sculpture studios
- City’s financial commitment to the arts and an arts coordinator
- Play areas for children
- Actual funding from the city and tax breaks for cultural groups

**With which of the Committees recommended at the last Arts Forum would you be interested in getting involved?**

Arts & Culture Facilities

Keith Nieto  
John Plummer  
Sharon Butler  
Claudia Cummings  
Judi Silvano  
Karen Heroy  
Letitia McDaniel  
Peg Kimple

	Robert Cash Leonard Lee Bernard Klevickas Paul Ellis Ramona Torres
Artist Studios and/or Housing	Neil Alexander Keith Nieto John Plummer Sharon Butler Robert Cash Meadow Bernard Klevickas Ramona Torres Patricia Simms
Calendar	Neil Alexander John Plummer Fr. Bill Scafidi Letitia McDaniel Eric Jarmann
Festivals and Street Fairs	Neil Alexander Keith Nieto John Plummer Eric Aytte Judi Silvano Susan Konvit Fr. Bill Scafidi Aquanetta Wright Letitia McDaniel (esp. Craft fairs, flea markets, movies in park, culinary arts, fashion) Peg Kimple Robert Cash Leonard Lee Paul Ellis Tasha Cotton
Historic Preservation Activities	Letitia McDaniel Ramona Torres
PR/Marketing	Aquanetta Wright Letitia McDaniel Leonard Lee Tasha Cotton Eric Jarmann Patricia Simms

Youth Arts Programs

Neil Alexander  
Sharon Butler  
Eric Ayyette  
Judi Silvano  
Susan Konvit  
Letitia McDaniel  
Peg Kimple  
Leonard Lee  
Paul Ellis

Neighborhood Revitalization

Karen Heroy